



# A Report on the 2006 Legislative Session

To the constituents of the 42<sup>nd</sup> District  
Representative **Doug Ericksen**

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Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Prior to the 2006 legislative session, I traveled Whatcom County and other parts of Washington meeting with people about issues important to them. After listening to their ideas, I worked to create the **Commitment to Washington – an 11-point plan to improve our state**. I also put together a **detailed plan to accomplish goals specific to Whatcom County**.

This newsletter will let you know where we moved forward and what issues went unresolved this legislative session.

For the past two years, I have worked hard to **bring the voices of Whatcom County to Olympia** and provide **balance in the political process**. It has been a rewarding and difficult challenge.

**It is important to stay in touch with those I represent.** In this newsletter you will find some of the **events I will be hosting during the upcoming months**. I hope you will be able to attend. This is not a complete list – and new events are being added.

Please give me a call if you want to meet or if you would like me to talk with a group of people on an issue important to you.

**It is an honor to represent the people of the 42nd Legislative District** in the Washington State House of Representatives. **Thank you for allowing me to serve you.**

Sincerely,

Doug Ericksen • State Representative • 42<sup>nd</sup> District



## Representative **Doug Ericksen**

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*Republican Floor Leader*

### **Committee assignments:**

Capital Budget  
Rules  
Transportation





# Commitment to Washington

## Commitment to Washington

Our **grassroots-driven** Commitment to Washington offers **hope, opportunity** and **accountability** to the state.

We made **progress this year** in **helping students** meet academic standards, **assisting families** with **energy costs**, **strengthening family farms**, and **eliminating state park fees**.

Unfortunately, some Commitment to Washington ideas were ignored in the areas of state spending, taxes, health care, and making our neighborhoods safer.

We will continue to **work with the public to promote good ideas** that did not pass this year. For an update on the **Commitment to Washington**, visit: <http://hrc.leg.wa.gov/priorities.htm>

## Disappointments

### Largest spending increase in state history

The Legislature passed a supplemental budget this year. The **result** was the **largest spending increase in state history** – a total of over **\$4 billion in new spending** in just two years.

Our **state budgeting process** has become **so complicated** it is **difficult for the public to understand**. I supported a **solution** called **“Truth in Budgeting”**:

- A “Sunshine Law” that would give the public time to review budgets;
- A constitutional spending limit;
- A reserve fund to ensure savings for a “rainy day”; and
- A 60 percent vote requirement to raise taxes.

## Fixing health care

The Legislature missed an opportunity to fix our health care system. **House Bill 2572, after it was amended by the Senate, offered hope**. These amendments were rejected. I **supported these concepts** and will continue to in the future:

- Offering a **business and occupation tax credit** for small employers who provide health care for their employees;
- Fixing **health savings account** programs; and
- Offering **less expensive, mandate-free health care plans**.

## Successes

### Helping students meet academic standards

We stood by our state academic standards this year while finding ways to assist students in meeting them:

- **\$20.2 million for additional instruction** for those students who did not pass portions of the WASL;
- **Diagnostic testing for students** to find and address their learning gaps; and
- Reviewing viable options for rigorous **career** and **technical education alternatives**.

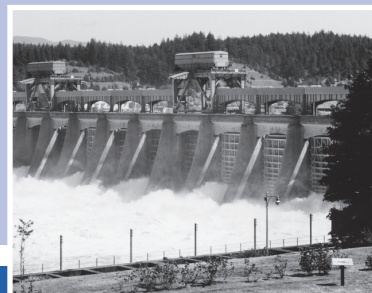
### Assisting farmers with their energy costs

We provided **relief to local farmers** through the **exemption of sales and use taxes on diesel fuel** used for non-highway purposes. The measure covers diesel fuel used for soil preparation, crop cultivation and crop harvesting services.

**Family farms** are **vital to Whatcom County** and **our state’s economy**. While this helps, **we still need to do more to help our farmers**.

### Enjoying our state parks without paying a fee

**You will no longer have to pay a \$5 fee when visiting our state parks**. This concept was part of our Commitment to Washington and we are happy to see it pass.





# Commitment to Whatcom County



## Moving forward with local transportation projects

Several local transportation projects are moving forward and I will continue to update you on their progress:

- **SR 543 widening** starts this spring
- **Guide Meridian improvements** (SR 539) will begin this summer and be completed by 2009
- **Highway 9 improvements** through Sumas start this spring
- **Improvements to I-5** through Bellingham are in progress
- **Increasing access to Blaine** at the Peace Arch border crossing

## Assisting our local aluminum smelter industry

I sponsored a measure this year that assists our aluminum smelter in Ferndale – an especially **important sector of our local economy**. Through the passage of **House Bill 2348**, aluminum smelters receive the economic incentives they need. This is one step in helping keep this important industry in Washington. I will be working on more related issues in the upcoming months.

## Promoting local economic development

I worked in a bipartisan fashion this year to pass a measure that will help local governments finance public infrastructure improvements. **House Bill 2673** creates the local infrastructure financing tool demonstration program which is designed to **promote economic development**. This is especially **important to Bellingham waterfront redevelopment**.

## Punishing sex offenders

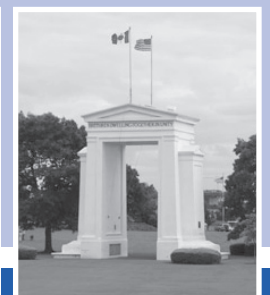
We took a small step in the right direction this year in punishing sex offenders through **House Bill 3277**. About **40 percent** of people who commit sexual offenses against children younger than 15, developmentally disabled people and vulnerable adults **will face 25-year sentences**.

The people of Washington deserved a stronger bill. **My concern is many perpetrators – around 60 percent – are eligible for shorter sentences and special treatment.**

We need to treat all sex offenders equally under the law and provide victims the assurance of long prison terms. **I will continue to fight for victims** who want and need this important protection.



*Rep. Ericksen shares a moment with his family on the House floor for Children's Day.*





# Listening to **Constituents**

## Representative **Doug Ericksen**

### **Meeting with constituents and local groups**

I would like to invite you to the following upcoming events. I think you will find them informative and collaborative. If you have any questions, please call or e-mail me.

#### **Helping local veterans get health care access in Bellingham**

**Tuesday, May 23**

*1:00 to 3:00 p.m.*

American Legion Post No. 7  
1688 W. Bakerview Road, Bellingham

#### **Kayaking with your state representative**

Come discuss environmental issues or any other topic on your mind while kayaking with your state representative.

**Saturday, June 24**

*Noon*

Zuanich Point Park – Squaticum Harbor, Bellingham  
Let's meet at the Fishermen's Memorial, rain or shine.  
Bring your own kayak!

### **You are invited ... more local events on the horizon**

Please watch for further information on these events:

- ✓ Health care legislative planning session – date TBD
- ✓ Drafting agriculture legislation for the 2007 session – date TBD
- ✓ Blaine border crossing (SR 543) truck route ground-breaking ceremony – later in May
- ✓ Guide Meridian widening project opening ceremony



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